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HITLER AND ARMS

by

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INTRODUCTION

For many years Mr. Garvin, the distinguished editor of the "Observer," and eminent British journalist and publicist, has been regarded by his fellow countrymen as an outstanding Germanophil. He has shown generous sympathies with Germany in her difficulties and has constantly advocated the revision of the Treaties and the acceptance of other German demands. Nor has he refrained from sharp criticism of France and French policy. Few British citizens have a deeper knowledge than he of German thought and literature.

The advent of the Nazi Government in Germany, its methods and its policy caused Mr. Garvin acute distress. He has felt bound to alter his views of Germany and her aims in their bearing upon Great Britain and Europe as a whole. His change of view is a portent in British public life. This pamphlet, which is of historic value, explains why Mr. Garvin, and indeed British feelings, have changed.

We are grateful for his courtesy in allowing us to reproduce his thought in this present form.

HITLER AND ARMS

THE QUESTION AND THE TRUTH.

WHY FRANCE SAYS "NOT NOW."

A STUDY OF NAZI PHILOSOPHY.

"WAR FOR WAR'S SAKE."

THE ISSUE FOR CIVILISATION.

(By J. L. GARVIN.)

If the Nazis had power enough at the present moment they would tear their neighbours to pieces. So far as their fanatical revolution has the power, what does it mean? It denies, contemns, and extirpates every moral principle for which the League was founded and whereon the hopes of peace were based. You can no more know a particular people without knowing its language than you can see out of a room without a window. To any man tolerably familiar with that language, with the lessons of Prussian history, and, above all, with the temperament of the most vehement of all races, what is now going on in Germany is appalling enough. Almost more appalling to a thoughtful mind is the extent of blindness elsewhere.

The whole problem of Disarmament, like that of Revision, is fundamentally changed. Many who are informed see this. Few say it. The time has come to speak the truth. Peace almost certainly can yet be saved by a stern determination to preserve it, and by an overwhelming combination for that purpose. It can be saved by nothing else. It never can be saved, in circumstances so profoundly altered, by the methods hitherto pursued at Geneva.

I.

IN PARIS.

The Disarmament Conference is to resume, and preliminary discussions between the French and British representatives have begun in Paris. Other conversations of equal importance are already taking place. We recognise the devoted intentions and efforts which have been given since the World War to this part of the work for peace. But if you will persist in beating your hands and knocking your head against a stone wall—which at first, excusably, you took for a door—do not blame the wall. From all the experiences and achievements, the aspirations and tragedies of mankind, there is no more certain deduction than this—that idealism without illusions is good for much, but that idealism with delusions is good for nothing. Worse than that it is the most fertile parent of mischief as well as failure.

It is the instinct not indeed of the greatest statesmen, but of most statesmen and politicians—just like other people—to defend what they have done and to continue in the course to which they have been publicly committed. Instead, it is their vital business to see clear; and to alter their plans when former conditions have been swept away and when former methods have become futile.

The talks in Paris have taken place on French invitation. We must well understand the position across

the Channel, and its bearing upon our own, before we can begin to grasp the elements of a totally altered problem. No matter what may have been the quarrels and differences between us and our neighbours in the past, that book is shut and put away. Never, not even amidst the thickening perils before the war, not even in the war itself, was the absolute solidarity of the two peoples more essential to both and to civilisation.

France under Monsieur Daladier is far more pacific and conciliatory, far less subject to doctrinaire logic, than under Monsieur Poincaré. But her political case to-day is stronger from every conceivable point of view, moral and practical. To put it shortly, her answer is "Not now."

II.

AN END OF DELUSION.

For ten years mechanical cures have been attempted for moral and psychological diseases. Platitudes accumulated while the cause of disarmament decayed. That method after the ten years has brought us to the present pass, where we find the question more difficult and perilous than ever it was before.

Let us see what the spirit of Hitlerism is before we consider how to deal with it. Its domestic system, whatever we may think of its repulsive cruelty towards the Jews and others, cannot be interfered with by any other Power. There can be nothing but ridicule and contempt for Socialists and others who have palliated for years every crime and barbarity in connection with the establishment and maintenance of Communist despotism in Russia; but who now appeal against the Nazi system in the name of the pure principles of humanity, liberty, and justice. When it seemed to suit their political book they looked on in cold blood while those principles were trampled and defiled. Moral protests are laughed at by the Nazis, and, as we said, there

can be no physical interference by foreign countries with their internal practices.

But the international aspect is another matter, and concerns us all. **If we were blind, Hitlerism would mean again the tramp to death for millions in other countries, and it could mean nothing else. By comparison with this every other aspect shrinks into insignificance.** Far more than Russian Bolshevism, which could be more easily confined to its own sphere in its worst days, and is at present a serious force on the side of peace, **the Nazi creed is the enemy of every hope for the future of mankind.**

The supreme desire, necessarily, of the Nazi camarilla is to gain time and to lull or delude foreign criticism while pushing on their preparations. For this purpose every plausible device will be employed, and there are already signs in this country that some unwary minds may be decoyed. That way madness lies. You cannot gather figs from thistles.

III.

"MOLOCH IN UNIFORM."

There was a fine film called "Mädchen in Uniform." Under the symbol of the Swastika flag to-day Germany, with an almost maniacal fervour of perverted idealism, is given over to the worship of Moloch in uniform. There you have two things not paralleled before. First a false glorification of "race" and of mythical Teutonism, carried with ecstatic egotism to the pitch of self-idolatry. Second, an organised glorification of war itself—not merely of patriotism in defence, but of war as an ideal—such as the world has never witnessed.

You have the youth of a nation systematically saturated and intoxicated by this hideous doctrine. You have the mass of a people goose-stepping in imagination to the blare and bray of Wagneresque music. You have total and ruthless suppression of the advocacy of peace. It

means torture or death to be a known or suspected pacifist in Germany to-day. It is much more dangerous than to be a Jew. Crushed without compunction are the historic and eternal English-speaking notions of free speech, free meeting, free publication. Under the same conditions John Milton for his "Areopagitica"—or "speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing," as our old words go—would have been beaten with rubber tubes filled with stones, or killed outright. "Back to the kitchen," woman with modern aspirations. For the rest, let her cease smoking cigarettes. Her highest duty henceforth is to breed and suckle more babies, males by preference, to be sent to the shambles in due time.

Innocent ignorance might well suppose we exaggerate. No; it is true to the letter, and we are coming to the proof. No human being outside Germany can exaggerate the demented barbarism of the doctrine. The thing is not a fantastic aberration on the part of a few morbid individuals. It is a deliberate philosophy with which a whole people henceforth is to be methodically inoculated by order of the omnipotent State. Hitlerism for the benefit of youth in schools and universities created some months ago various professors of "military science." We must not be misled by the euphemism. They are to be not only lecturers on the history of war and on the technique of its future horrors. They are to be the enthusiastic propagandists of the war-spirit for its own sake.

IV.

THE NAZI PHILOSOPHY OF WAR.

Take an example which is intensely typical and a very useful revelation. *The Times* the other day added conspicuously to its many services in this connection. Our contemporary published a full and fair account of a manual for the use of youth by one of the new academic apostles of militarism. The author is Professor Ewald Banse, of Brunswick Technical High School. We have no doubt that he is a good man. Personally, he may be

a mild. But listen to what he preaches fervently in the name of youth and truth. Then ask yourself whether Mephistopheles or Beelzebub could dream of more desirable instruction for mankind.

This is a brief but faithful summary of the doctrine which is officially approved and merely elaborates the ecstatic idealism of blood-lust recently preached in public by the Vice-Chancellor of this new Germany, the elderly but ineffable von Papen.

War is not only inevitable. War is good. Rightly comprehended is the emanation on earth of the holy of holies. It should be regarded as normal and necessary that nations *en masse* at intervals, not too far apart, should let out each other's bowels; or, according to the more advanced principles of "military science" which this professor is particularly appointed to inculcate, should shatter, stifle, burn, or poison each other.

War—goes on this philosophy—is the highest form of physical and moral exercise to which the contemplations of the human mind have thus far attained. Life being given, and sufficiently continued, is not a personal possession, but belongs to the state and the "race." Blood-offering in that service is the first of social duties. The mind of a people from childhood should be familiarised and penetrated with the idea of war. In this light all knowledge should be assimilated and nature itself interpreted. Mountains, lakes, rivers must no longer be regarded for a moment with romantic reverie but should be vigilantly considered—especially, we suppose, by holiday makers hitherto careless—from the standpoint of tactics and strategy. The movements of animals and birds, watched with more intelligence than has so far prevailed, will be found full of military suggestion.

V.

"THIS WAY MADNESS LIES."

Under a true system of State eugenics—goes on the Professor—warlike individuals must be particularly encouraged to procreate. Women when their new-born

babies are put into their arms must firmly contemplate the ultimate destruction of these infants. Babies of all nations are brought forth to kill each other periodically when mature. The dying warrior must shed his blood as in glad libation to his "National God." "Our good old god of Brandenburg," as the ex-Kaiser used to say in his fashion of localising a deity. **Religion and the Churches must be utilised more efficiently for the purposes of the war-philosophy.** Under the auspices of true national religion, false sanctimoniousness will be banished. The study, for instance, of how bacterial infection—typhus or plague or other—may be spread with most deadly resource amongst enemy nations, must be pursued with spiritual conviction.

In no nation on earth but one to-day is this kind of infernal preaching not only allowed, but officially instituted, salaried, and encouraged. Of what avail are mechanical cures, such as have been impotently discussed these ten years, for a mental perversion so monstrous as this and for a moral disease so virulent?

We shall return in coming weeks to other aspects of this subject. Upon whether it is regarded rightfully and in time by all other great nations, the fate of Europe and of Western civilisation will ultimately depend.

Nothing, we repeat, but an overwhelming combination in the spirit and faith of peace will avail to prevent these doctrines of scientific bestiality from coming to the logic of action. There are happily signs that such a combination will be formed. Meanwhile, the argument of France to-day is impregnable. She will not and she cannot disarm—none of us can further disarm—until Hitlerism ceases to preach the infernal idealism of war for the sake of war, and begins to give intelligible assurances of safe behaviour.